

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SURABAYA 0163

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF EAST JAVA MOSLEM ON CURRENT POLITICS

1. SUMMARY: A PROMINANT MEMBER OF THE MOSLEM COMMUNITY IN EAST JAVA BELIEVES THAT THE NEW NATIONAL CABINET IS ALREADY DIVIDED AND WILL BE UNABLE TO REMAIN AS IT IS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED. HE SEES POWER IN INDONESIA BEING USED IN THE MANNER OF THE ANCIENT JAVANESE STATES. HE FEELS TECHNOCRATS ARE SACRIFICING THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE FOR THE GOAL OF RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH. HE BELIEVES THE ARREST OF FOUR MOSLEM FIGURES RECENTLY IS IN RESPONSE TO MOSLEM PARTY WALKOUTS DURING THE RECENT SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT. END SUMMARY

2. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE NATIONAL MPR (PARLIAMENT) SESSION, RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO, AND THE ARREST OF FOUR MOSLEM FIGURES IN THE CAPITAL LAST WEEK, CONOFF SOUGHT OUT AND CONVERSED AT SOME LENGTH WITH SPOKESMAN OF THE SANTRI (PURIST MOSLEM) COMMUNITY IN EAST JAVA. ABDUL RACHMAN WAHID, DIRECTOR OF PONDOK PESANTREN (MOSLEM BOARDING SCHOOL) "TEBUIRENG" IN JOMBANG IS NEPHEW OF JUSUF HASJIM, MPR MEMBER AND NOMINAL CHAIRMAN OF "TEBUIRENG",

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AND SON OF WACHID HASJIM, STATE MINISTER FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN THE FIRST SUKARNO/HATTA CABINET AND DISPUTED FORMULATOR OF THE PANCASILA STATE IDEOLOGY. ABDUL RACHMAN WAHID HIMSELF AVOIDS FORMAL ASSOCIATION WITH ORGANIZATIONS--E.G. THE ISLAMIC PARTY (PPP) OR THE ISLAMIC STUDENT ORGANIZATION (HMI)--OTHER THAN HIS CLUSTER OF PESANTRENS AROUND JOMBANG, ALTHOUGH HE IS LOOKED UPON AS AN UNOFFICIAL SPIRITUAL LEADER BY THE "YOUNGER GENERATION" OF

MOSLEM ADHERENTS IN EAST JAVA.

3. IN CONTRAST TO THE RETICENCE OF PPP LEADERS ENCOUNTERED IN SURABAYA, WAHID WAS WILLING TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS ABOUT THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. HE SAID "THE SITUATION IS CHANGING BUT NOT GETTING BETTER." HIS JUDGEMENT IS THAT THE NEW CABINET, AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD TOGETHER FOR LONG. SHIFTS AND FURTHER EXPULSIONS, AS OCCURRED DURING THE CABINET CHANGEOVER, ARE INEVITABLE. AN INDICATION FOR WAHID OF EARLY DISSONANCE AT THE CENTER IS THE ISSUES NORMALLY DEBATED QUIETLY AMONG THE MINISTERS, SUCH AS WHAT MINISTRY WILL HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WATCHING OVER THE "KEPERCAYAAN" (MYSTICAL) ADHERENTS IN SOCIETY, ARE NOW BEING DEBATED BY THE MINISTERS IN FRONT OF THE PRESS IN FULL VIEW OF THE PUBLIC. HE SEES THE CENTRAL

GOVERNMENT BEING RUN MUCH AS THE OLD JAVANESE KINGDOMS WERE, WITH FACTIONAL STRUGGLE AND COURT INTRIGUE DOMINATING THE FORMULATION OF PUBLIC POLICY. IT IS WAHID'S PERCEPTION THAT THE MINISTERS DO NOT DEBATE OR EVEN DISCUSS, POLICY AT CABINET MEETINGS BUT RATHER PERFORM IN A KRATON (PALACE) ATMOSPHERE WHERE THE SOVEREIGN RECEIVES HIS MINISTERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF HEARING THEIR REPORTS AND THEN EITHER PRONOUNCES THEM GOOD OR GIVES THE EQUIVALENT OF "TLL GET BACK TO YOU ON THIS."

4. WAHID FEELS THAT TECHNOCRATS ARE SACRIFICING THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE--OR, IN HIS VIEW, THE RURAL SANTRI
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COMMUNITY--IN THEIR EFFORT TO INDUSTRIALIZE THE COUNTRY RAPIDLY AND BOOST GNP. WAHID SAID "WE DON'T NEED 'THE NEW ORDER', WE NEED A DIFFERENT ORDER." WAHID'S VIEW IS THAT INDONESIA REQUIRES MORE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENTS AND FEWER TECHNOCRATS. HE SAID SANTRI INTELLECTUALS ARE NOW FOCUSING THEIR ATTENTION ON WAYS TO TRAIN ISLAMIC ORIENTED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENTS TO COMPLEMENT THEIR AGE-OLD OBJECTIVE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGH THE PESANTRENS

5. WAHID BELIEVES THAT THE ARREST OF FOUR MOSLEM FIGURES DURING THE PAST WEEK IS A DIRECT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO WALKOUTS STAGED BY PPP MEMBERS DURING MPR SESSIONS. AGAIN WAHID CITED EARLY JAVANESE KINGDOMS AS THE MODEL FOR CURRENT CONCEPTIONS OF STATECRAFT, INCLUDING NOTIONS THAT POWER SHOULD HAVE ONE NUCLEUS AND THE FAILURE OF THE POWER-HOLDER TO STRIKE DOWN OPPONENTS CONSTITUTES A SIGN OF WEAKNESS AND AN OMEN OF FURTHER DECLINE AND COLLAPSE.

6. COMMENT: WAHID IS A RELATIVELY MODERATE OPPONENT OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT, AND INASMUCH AS HE IS AN INFLUENTIAL AND ARTICULATE SPOKESMAN FOR THE OPPOSITION, HE AND THOSE LIKE HIM REPRESENT SOMETHING OF
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CHALLENGE TO THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT. THREE ELEMENTS MAKE THE MOSLEMS

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POTENTIAL PROBLEM HERE--THE EXISTENCE OF ARTICULATE LEADERS LIKE WAHID, A LARGE MASS OF GENERALLY DOCILE SANTRI FAITHFUL--SAY ONE THIRD OF THE EAST JAVA POPULATION--WHO ARE MORE ATTENTIVE TO THEIR KIAI (RELIGIOUS TEACHERS) THAN THEY ARE TO SECULAR OFFICIALS, AND THE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE FANATICAL ELEMENT THAT IS RUMORED TO EXIST AMONG SOME ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY. EAST JAVA HAS A REPUTATION FOR BEING A CENTER (PERHPAS SECOND ONLY TO ACEH) FOR ISLAMIC FANATICISM. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AN ANTI-GOVERNMENT, MOSLEM REBELLION BASED IN EAST JAVA, ANY EFFORT TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE VIEWS WAHID AND HIS FELLOW BELIEVERS HOLD COULD ULTIMATELY CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO THE NEW ORDER GOVERNMENT AND SUHARTO'S THIRD DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED GOVERNMENT.
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